

## Article - Natural Resources

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§5–218.

(a) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated:

(1) “Corps” means the Maryland Conservation Corps.

(2) “Youth” means a Maryland resident who is age 16 through 24.

(b) There is a Maryland Conservation Corps in the Department.

(c) The Corps shall provide meaningful and productive employment for available manpower of this State in the field of development and maintenance of the State’s natural resources. The General Assembly finds that employing Maryland’s youth to conserve or develop natural resources and enhance and maintain environmentally important lands and waters is:

(1) Beneficial to the youth of the State because it provides them with educational and work opportunities; and

(2) Beneficial to the State’s economy and environment.

(d) The purpose of this section is to provide Maryland’s youth with a work experience opportunity that will:

(1) Further their understanding and appreciation of natural resources; and

(2) Teach them basic and fundamental work ethics, including:

(i) Discipline;

(ii) Cooperation;

(iii) The ability to live and work with others; and

(iv) The value of a day’s work.

(e) The Corps shall engage in projects for:

(1) Conserving, improving, and developing natural resources; and

(2) Enhancing, preserving, and maintaining environmentally important public lands and waters.

(f) Corps projects shall conserve, improve, or develop natural resources or enhance, preserve, and maintain environmentally important public lands and waters, while providing youths with an opportunity for personal development in a variety of basic skills. Projects shall be undertaken in both urban and rural areas on the basis of:

(1) The environmental and natural resource benefits the project offers;

(2) The opportunity for public use the project offers; and

(3) The on-the-job training value of the project.

(g) Youths participating in the Corps shall work in projects which do the following:

(1) Preserve, maintain, and enhance environmentally important lands and waters;

(2) Work on public works projects in urban and rural areas;

(3) Conserve, maintain, improve, and develop natural resources in urban and rural areas;

(4) Assist in emergency operations, such as natural disaster relief and the rescue of lost and injured individuals;

(5) Assist in fire prevention and suppression;

(6) Directly contribute to the conservation of energy;

(7) Contribute toward making public facilities accessible to individuals with disabilities; and

(8) Assist other State agencies in developing, rehabilitating, and restoring parklands, recreational facilities, historical resources, fish spawning and rearing habitats, wildlife habitats, and the Chesapeake Bay.

(h) (1) The Department shall recruit and employ youths for the Corps through existing State service delivery systems.

(2) The Department shall recruit youths for employment in the Corps without regard to their prior employment or educational background.

(3) A youth recruited for the Corps may not be hired through mechanisms for the employment of skilled service or professional service employees in the State Personnel Management System and may not earn any of the benefits of a skilled service or professional service employee, with the exception of special appointments.

(i) Annual funding for the Corps will be from:

(1) Appropriated funds; or

(2) The Forest and Park Reserve Fund.

(j) The Department shall use any federal appropriations that:

(1) May become available; and

(2) Are designated for State employment programs in the field of natural resources conservation.

(k) The Department shall adopt rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this section.

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